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S E R M O N S

WRITTEN

BY A LADY,

THE TRANSLATRESS OF
FOUR SELECT TALES

FROM

M A R M O N T E L.



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M D C C L X X.



P R E F A C E.

THE Work which I offer to the Public, being of an extraordinary kind for a woman's pen, it is necessary to say what gave occasion to it.

About two years since, having a conversation with a clergyman of my acquaintance concerning preaching in general, he, betwixt jest and earnest, declared he would preach any sermon which I would

write. An agreement was made, and I sat down to compose.

As I had always looked on persons of a covetous disposition with a mixture of pity and indignation, and having met with many of a contracted, narrow turn of mind, and very few who answered my idea of generosity, the text which had occurred on several occasions, when I could have wished not to have had reason for it, presented itself now, and I pitched on that as a subject on which I might express
 7 my

my thoughts. Some accidental circumstances prevented its being preached: but having once entered on that kind of writing, I could not help committing to paper some thoughts which had frequently passed over my mind on the insufficiency of this life for real happiness, and the uncertainty of all that wore that appearance. On this occasion I expatiated on the words of Job; a book which I had always read with admiration and melancholy pleasure. The Sermon on Re-

venge is composed of arguments which I had often made use of to calm the spirit of retaliation, which I have found rising in my breast, on my having met with unkind treatment where I thought I had not deserved, and had no reason to expect it.

These three discourses lay by me a long while, without my thinking much about them; till having mentioned to a friend a desire I had of turning to some advantage what I had written,
 he

he told me the thought was not amiss, but they were too few to publish alone, and advised me to write four more.

I chose those subjects on which I had most reflected, and on which therefore I had most to say. The terrible consequences of Slander to defenceless Women, and the extreme cruelty of the practice against those, who generally labour under evils sufficient to embitter life without that addition, had often employed my thoughts; and

the equitable admonition of Our Saviour, delivered in that admirable sermon which contained the most perfect rule of life that ever was given to man, appeared to me a proper text. As the usual consequence of having my spirits raised has been the feeling them greatly depressed, I had often, on those occasions, quoted to myself the words of Solomon, which I have now fixed on as a topic for the fifth essay. I have always entertained the highest notion of filial duty, which I think is lately grown

grown too little the fashion; and this furnished me with matter for another. The seventh was the hint of a friend, who is herself a mother, and whose partiality to my judgment made her desirous to know if my opinion coincided with her own in the article of education.

I hope this account will prevent my being accused of vanity in endeavouring to reform mankind. I really never had such a thought: but if I can be at all bene-

beneficial to that part of it to which I belong, among whom there are some who will not disdain to take advice from a female writer, I shall esteem myself happy to be able to conduce to their amusement or improvement. The very young, whose minds are not yet formed, and who are startled at the idea of reading a sermon, may, thro' the novelty of these, be induced to peruse, and may possibly learn some useful lessons from them.

As

As a farther apology, let me observe that political disputes now employ the tongues and pens of almost all degrees of men, as well clergy as laity, so that they have no time to think of any thing else. The rage of public virtue is so great, that private virtue is almost forgotten. When patriotism and loyalty engage all the wits of the age, it is no wonder that a Woman should take the lower department, and venture to write moral essays. The candid will remember that it is the work of a

Woman, and will not be very severe in their criticism; the censure of others I am not solicitous to deprecate, as I think too highly of the Public to suppose it can influence their judgment.

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S E R M O N I.



S E R M O N I.

MATTH. XIX. 24.

*I say unto you, it is easier for a camel
to go through the eye of a needle, than
for a rich man to enter into the king-
dom of heaven.*

THIS is a hard saying, and might
well give occasion to the ques-
tion put to our Saviour, by his dis-
ciples, of, Who then can be saved?
However, if we examine a little far-
ther, I think I shall prove that no im-
possibility is implied by these words:

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in order to this, let us recollect to whom, and on what account, they were spoken. A young gentleman of large fortune, who had been a strict observer of the Jewish law, who was conscious of having discharged himself justly in his dealings with mankind, indeed, one who does not seem to have been deficient in any point of moral duty, yet found something wanting in himself, and was sensible he had done nothing which could insure him eternal life. Under this conviction he applied to our Saviour, hoping he might find something in the new religion which might set his mind

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mind at rest with regard to a future state; flattering himself, perhaps, that the compliance with a few external ceremonies would secure him everlasting felicity: but how thunder-struck was he, when the Great Founder of our faith demanded the surrender of all his goods to the poor, and promised him treasure in heaven, on no other terms than the parting with what he possessed on earth. But here it may be asked, If the rich man could not have been a worthy member of Christianity without so great a sacrifice? To which I answer, That in those early times I

think such a sacrifice was absolutely necessary : our blessed Saviour constantly taught his disciples a contempt for all sublunary riches and honours ; he often repeated to them that his kingdom was not of this world : that if they would be his disciples indeed, they must submit to poverty and disgrace ; must be strangers and pilgrims on earth, as became the followers of a master who had no place to lay his head, and who was so poor as not to be able to pay the tribute due unto Cæsar without the assistance of a miracle. Our Lord knew the opposition a doctrine so contrary to worldly wisdom

dom

S E R M O N I.

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dom must naturally meet with : he knew that the propagators of it would be afflicted, tormented, persecuted, and even suffer death for his name's sake : " Think not, says he, I am come to send peace on earth, I am come to send a sword ;" for that he knew would be the consequence of man's perverseness and disobedience. It was incumbent then on men who were to be subject to the cruelty and malice of the world ; who were to sit loose to all earthly enjoyments, and to be ready to lay down their lives, whenever they were called for, rather than renounce their faith ; to have

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their

their minds disengaged from all lower concerns, and their hearts fixed upon an incorruptible treasure, which it was not in the power of any earthly potentate either to destroy or diminish.

Thus much is, I think, sufficient to prove, that it must have been a great impediment to the progress of the gospel, if the first preacher of it had been wealthy: besides which, it is not unreasonable to suppose, that the Son of God, the Great Searcher of hearts, plainly saw that this young man's was too contracted to entertain the extensive benevolence, and unbounded

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bounded liberality, which are the great principles of the Christian institution, and without which religion is no more than a name : he was strictly just; but what merit could he claim from that ? born, as he was, to large possessions, what temptation had he to injure his neighbour either by violence or fraud ? That there are oppressive rich ones I confess; but they are so far from deserving the title of Christians, that they are not worthy of that of men, but may be justly looked on as infernal spirits in human shape, who are suffered for a time to indulge their evil inclinations, by being

ing the pests of society; but it is to be hoped such characters are rare.

The generality of the world think they have discharged their duty towards their neighbour, if they have never invaded another's property, and look upon it they have an undoubted right to keep what they call their own by inheritance or acquisition to their own use. Unhappy delusion! fatal error! produced by the love of gold; the man who inherits an affluent fortune, while he sees multitudes around him pining in want of the necessaries of life, for multitudes such he must see

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see (unless he wilfully shuts his eyes) ought to look up to heaven with the utmost gratitude, who has not only placed him above the miseries of dependance, and receiving obligations, which are too often conferred in such a manner as to fill the feeling mind with the keenest anguish, though hard necessity compels the acceptance; but, instead of the painful task of receiving, assigns to him the pleasing one of bestowing and imitating his great Creator in the only thing by which he can become like him, that of being a father to the fatherless, and wiping away the tear of complaint from the afflicted

afflicted widow's eye: but if, like Dives in the parable, his flinty heart is not to be softened by the distresses of others, let self-love at least prevail on him to act as if it were so; let him remember with dread that exclamation of our Saviour's, "How hardly shall riches enter the kingdom of heaven:" and let him not suffer that wealth which, properly used, might be his passport to a blissful eternity, to be an everlasting bar against his entrance: but there are some men who desire to compromise the matter; and, provided they be allowed to hoard their treasure, or spend it in selfish

S E R M O N I. 13

selfish gratifications while they live, would be willing at their deaths to make ample amends, by leaving a large portion of what they can no longer enjoy to some public charity: by this pretence they look on themselves as excused from every act of benevolence during life; but at the hour of death their awakened consciences never fail to tell them how miserably they have been deceived; and they wish, though then, alas! such wishes are in vain, that they had some few deeds of real charity to cover their many faults, and plead for them at the throne of mercy.

Men

Men of acquired fortunes have generally very plausible reasons for not being generous : we have earned our money with the sweat of our brows, say they, surely we have a right to enjoy it likewise ; the industrious never fail of success, and indolence is the only parent of want. Tho' this may be often true, yet it is far from being a general rule : let the prosperous man abate a little of his self-sufficiency, and recollect, and he will find that his success has not been owing merely to his own industry, but has generally been aided by some lucky chance ; some kind assisting friends, guided by

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providence, has led him forward, which others of equal merit have not been able to find; let him not then arrogate too much to himself, nor too severely censure the less fortunate, or always charge their ill fortune to their ill conduct, but rather let him, as becomes a man and a Christian, endeavour to alleviate the distresses which the unkindness of the world, joined to their own errors, may have brought upon them, to assist them with his advice, his interest, or his purse, as occasion requires; and raise to cheerful industry, by the prospect of reward, the mind which frequent dif-

disappointment has sunk to inactivity
and desolation. I hope to see a nation
not so much as this; but I am not then

It is to be lamented that persons
of high rank, whose fortunes enable
them to relieve the poor and distressed,
are so far removed above want
themselves, and so little accustomed
to the seeing it in others, that they
seldom think of or feel for it properly;
while the man of liberal heart
and narrow circumstances is often
wounded by sighs of woe, which, as
it is utterly out of his power to alleviate
by any thing more than a pitying
tear, serves only to give unnecessary
pain,

pain, and make him regret the want of ability to do that which, perhaps, had providence blessed him with, he might have neglected; so seldom do riches and liberality meet. It is true, there is a kind of fashionable charity subsisting among us, and it is no uncommon thing to hear that a certain noble personage has ordered a certain sum of money to be laid out in provisions, and distributed among the poor:—This is generally mentioned with great encomiums in the news-papers as a laudable example for others to follow: That it is truly laudable to provide for the necessities

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cessities of the industrious labourer, far be it from me to deny ; but there are a set of unhappy people, whose lot is cast above the lowest sort, and yet want the comforts which even they enjoy. Ashamed to beg, unable to dig, these I recommend as proper objects for the rich to exercise their generosity on : let them seek them in their obscurity, and they will find families whom they may make happy by sums so inconsiderable as by themselves to be scarcely missed ; they will there find worthy people who have been reduced to poverty by unavoidable and unforeseen misfortunes, and

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unable to bear up against them for want of the assistance of friends and money; some who have owed their ruin to their own goodness of heart, whose generous, unsuspecting natures have been imposed upon by artful and designing men; such as these who have erred through excess of virtue, have certainly a claim which no liberal mind can refuse; and many may be likewise found whose sufferings have been owing to their own follies; yet sufferings still they are, and they who feel the weight of them have a right to pity and relief from creatures who are not themselves exempt from the

*Who have paid more ^{C 2} attention ^{fail-} to the
voice of Charity & Benevolence, than
to the state of their Finances*

failings of humanity. Indeed, I know not how to believe there are any people so void of tenderness and compassion, as to upbraid a man for indiscretions, at the time he is feeling their dreadful consequences. Can there be a more pitiable object, than the father of a family who sees his children around him destitute of support, and must reproach himself as the cause ? and can there be a greater act of generosity than to alleviate such distress, by putting it in his power to retrieve past errors, and provide for the innocent sharers of his destiny ?

May

S E R M O N I. - 21

May the Almighty Disposer of all events incline the hearts of all who abound in this world's wealth to such true benevolence; the reflections on such actions will give comfort at the hour of death, when all worldly riches shall cease to afford any; and our Blessed Saviour has plainly told us, that feeding the hungry, cloathing the naked, visiting the sick, comforting the afflicted, are the only works that shall stand us in any stead at the great day of judgment. Now to God the Father, &c.

MEMORIAL

May the Almighty Father of all
mercies incline the hearts of all who
belong to the world's wealth to their
neighbourhood, the effect of our
actions will give comfort at the hour
of death, when all worldly riches shall
be to us as a cloud and our blessed
saviour has kindly told us that
we are naked, clothing the naked,
visiting the sick, comforting the af-
flicted, and the only works that shall
stand us in any stead at the great day
of judgment. Now to God the Fa-
ther, Son, and Holy Spirit.

S E R M O N H.



S E R M O N II.

MATTH. vi. 15.

But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

IT is allowed, even by the greatest enemies of Christianity, that there never was any system of religion so perfect, so calculated to promote the general good of society, as that contained in the gospel: all its tenets inspire love and good-will towards mankind: none surely can be more
con-

conducive to universal happiness than the precept so often and so positively enjoined “ of the forgiveness of injuries :” this was a virtue unknown in the Heathen world : the most enlightened among them, they whose notions came the nearest to Christianity, were so mistaken as to look on it as a mark of a cowardly and base mind not to revenge an injury. With them revenge was virtue ; a virtue which long experience convinces us the lowest and vilest of mankind are capable of attaining. Our minds are naturally led to resent ill usage ; and even the Jews, the people chosen of God,

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to whom he deigned to reveal his will in a more particular manner than to the rest of the world, were but very imperfect practitioners of this duty of forgiveness: nay, we find amongst the best of them some very unjustifiable instances of revenge; and the most that any one could arrive at was not to return evil for evil: but the Godlike act of returning good for evil, of blessing our enemy when he cursed us, of feeding him when hungry, and supplying him with drink when dry, was too great a mastery over the passions for human nature, unassisted, ever to arrive at. Nor
would

would (I may venture to affirm) the positive command of God himself, forbidding revenge, have been sufficient to restrain creatures so prone to it, had not our Blessed Saviour condescended so far to our weakness as to be our companion here on earth, and not only to enjoin this great duty by precept, but was himself the most perfect pattern of a meek and forgiving spirit that the world ever saw. The friend of mankind, he went about doing good : he administered to our temporal wants ; he healed our infirmities, and recommended to our practice a religion which, if followed, will

will as undoubtedly conduce to our peace and happiness in this state, as it will most assuredly procure it for us in one eternal. What return did an ungrateful and unfeeling world make to such invaluable favours? Why, they fed on his bounty, and then forgot the miraculous hand that had bestowed it on them: they were healed by his sovereign touch, and then, with a strange and unheard of baseness, ascribed his power to sorcery and enchantment: and at length, to crown all, and to carry their hatred as far as possible, they seized on their Benefactor, their Redeemer, and their God;

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God; and, with sacrilegious hands, put him to the most painful and ignominious death: yet, at the moment that he submitted to their unjust decree, boundless as his power was, when he could in an instant have commanded fire from heaven to have destroyed his enemies, he prayed for them to his Father, alleviating their guilt, by imputing it to their ignorance.

I particularly address myself to those whose nice sensibility has been wounded by undeserved reproach; those whose delicate feelings have been

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been roused by the sharp sting of ingratitude, and let them tell me if they do not find their injuries lessen, and their resentments vanish, in the contemplation of what their Lord endured for their sakes? In the day of adversity his most intimate friends and followers forsook him and fled; and he, who had been distinguished by marks of particular kindness, and who, but a few hours before, had repeatedly declared he would die with him, denied even the knowledge of him. None ever had it in their power to display such striking marks of the virtue of forgiveness,

ness, because none ever received so many and so great injuries, as he who is said "to have been despised and rejected of his brethren, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief." But notwithstanding this great example, which was designed for our imitation, such is the perverse bias of our dispositions, that no command of our Redeemer is more industriously evaded than that express one of "forgiving others their trespasses, as we ourselves hope to be forgiven," under a false notion that we lose our dignity, and suffer our enemy to triumph over us; by neglecting to revenge an insult, our
pride

pride takes the alarm, when otherwise perhaps our enmity might sleep: but, alas! how unfit are such vindictive spirits to be judges in their own cause; how likely to aggravate the affronts they have received, and to apportion their resentments according to the imaginary offence.

It will certainly be allowed that the most just among us are inclinable to judge well of themselves; and the more merit any one thinks he has, the greater appears the injury that he thinks has been done him; and when his imagination is heated by a sense of wrong,

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I am afraid he will not be quite equitable in his vengeance. Another reason against pursuing revenge is, that we do not know where it will stop: for the man who could, unprovoked, do us an injury, will certainly not be just enough to submit to our punishments, but will take the first opportunity of returning it; this will call for a second revenge: thus we shall be engaged in a state of continual hostilities, and, instead of mutual good offices, our time will be spent in a retaliation of injuries. It is certainly the interest of every man to use his utmost endeavours to eradicate this
tur-

turbulent untruly passion from his
breast: for I know not which to say
is the most pitiable object, he who
broods over his wrongs, lamenting
his want of power to revenge; or
he who pleases himself with the dia-
bolic and short-lived satisfaction of
rendering his enemy as unhappy as
himself: but undoubtedly they may
both be said to carry a hell in their
bosom.

I am convinced men would want
few persuasives to forgiveness, if they
rightly considered the imperfection of
human nature; how liable we are to

mistake the meaning of words; how apt to be imposed on by a misrepresentation of facts, we may charge that to design which was the effect of inadvertency; and our being hurt may be owing perhaps more to the too great nicety of our sensations, than to any real offence we have received.——But let us take it in the worst light, and suppose the blow that has been given to have proceeded from a malignant heart, yet shall we suffer our enemy to triumph over us, by being able to shake our souls from a steady adherence to Christian virtue? No, rather let us imitate our
great

S E R M O N II. 37

great Master, by pitying the wretch, who, in injuring us, has offended a Being as just as he is merciful, and who will not fail to punish all such evil doers. "Vengeance is mine, saith the Lord, and I will surely repay:" to him then let us leave it, nor impiously dare to direct the thunder-bolt from his Almighty Hand, by assuming the right of punishment to ourselves. Nor let the mistaken pride, which makes us dread the censure of creatures not at all superior to ourselves, prevail over our good resolutions, and make us act contrary to the dictates of our own conscience.

True greatness of mind can never consist in revenge, since the basest, the meanest coward, will pursue it to the utmost: but to forbear revenge, and forgive your enemy when you have him in your power, is an action which will add dignity to the highest character, and a victory over the passions, which none but the truly brave could ever attain. It is true, there are some cases in which a man is obliged to vindicate his right, where his fortune or reputation are injuriously attacked. It is so far from being blameable, that it is really commendable to defend them to the utmost of our power:

but

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but having done that, let all personal malice cease; and though our adversary should be fullen, and make no concession, yet let not that impede our forgiveness, but let us remember that we are beings liable to error, and not insist on that submission and acknowledgement of offence from our fellow-creatures, which is due only to God: that God, who is our common father and our judge, and who hath taught us by the parable of the unmerciful servant on what terms we may expect mercy.

When we look up to the great source of all perfection, in whose sight the angels are not pure, and consider our own imperfection, how often we offend, and how miserable we must be unless he pardons, can we be severe to our fellow-servant, whose weak nature, like our own, is not always proof against temptation? "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them who trespass against us," is the Christian's daily prayer: and it is a mockery of God to offer up petitions on such terms as we are resolved not to comply with. Let us not deceive ourselves, and think that a meer outward

S E R M O N II. 41

ward form, and words of course, will supply the place of that unfeigned cordial forgiveness which Christ requires as only available for God's pardoning us; "for so likewise, saith he, shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every man his trespasses." He elsewhere enjoins his disciples to intercede with God for their enemies, before whom it is both impious and dangerous to dissemble, and from whom no mercy can be expected for those who with feigned lips ask it for others. A man who consults his own ease, will certainly never suffer the

corrosive pangs of malignity and hatred to take possession of his breast, instead of the gentle, pacific frame of mind which, promoting the good of others, ensures peace and tranquility to himself in this world, and on which his happiness to all eternity depends.

It would be vain to urge any more arguments : he who refuses obedience to this law shuts the gates of heaven against himself ; nor aught doth it avail him that the Son of God condescended to be made Man, to live a life of poverty and affliction, and to die

S E R M O N II. 43

die an ignominious and painful death,
since he rejects the terms of salvation.

From this perverse and wicked turn
of mind, so hurtful to our own souls,
may that God, whose vengeance is
terrible, and whose mercies are infi-
nite, preserve us, through the merits
and intercession of Jesus Christ.

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of which is harmful to our own souls.

now that God, whose vengeance is

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S E R M O N III.



S E R M O N III.

J O B xix. 26,

*For though after this life worms destroy
this body, yet in my flesh shall I see
God.*

TH E S E were the words of Job
at a time when he seems to have
lost all hopes of earthly happiness,
and to have fixed his thoughts only
on something beyond the grave, as
appears from many passages in the
foregoing chapters ; where he, in the
most pathetic terms, laments his for-

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lorn condition. " My face is foul with weeping, saith he ; my eye also, by reason of my sorrow, is dim ; and on my eyelids is the shadow of death."

He then enumerates his uncommon misfortunes, till too much dispirited with the sad recollection to plead any longer against the unjust reproaches of his friends, he implores their pity, in such a moving though short sentence, that had they not been the most unfeeling of men, they would have ceased to persecute him who seemed already but too sensible of having, though he knew not for what cause, fallen under the displeasure of

S E R M O N III. 49

the Almighty. He next declares his despair of being otherwise than miserable in this world, and looks forward to the end of life as the only end of his sorrow. " My breath is corrupt, saith he, my days are extinct, the grave is ready for me : " but comforts himself with the certain assurance that he shall one day renew his life, and be made ample amends for his past sufferings, by the everlasting society of his Redeemer. This is what he means by those words, " I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the last day on the earth : and though, after this life,

E

worms

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worms destroy my body, yet in my
flesh shall I see God."

In discoursing on this text, I mean,
first, to shew the folly of looking on
any thing in this world as permanent
enough to engage our affections;
next, to prove the certainty of a fu-
ture state; and, lastly, to conclude
with an exhortation to such a life as
will afford us comfort at the approach
of eternity.

Surely, if ever any man had reason
to think his happiness fixed on a cer-
tain duration, it was Job, who was

S E R M O N III. 51

born to a princely fortune, of consequence sufficient to be courted by the nobles of the land, who consulted him as their oracle, and hung with silent admiration and respect on the eloquence of his words. The multitude, whose wants his bounteous hand supplied, followed him as he passed; every tongue blessed him, and every eye melting with gratitude, expressed the joy which filled the heart. Blessed with a numerous progeny, he looked forward with the hope of seeing his days renewed in his children: nor was he unmindful of the Author of all good, who had bestowed so large a

portion of it on him ; but expressed his thanks in a manner that was most pleasing to his God, by admitting others to share it largely with him : yet, contrary to all expectation, was this great good man suddenly thrown down from the heighth of human glory to the lowest depth of misery : deprived of his children, his fortune, and his health : left destitute of every comfort ; and what made it the more terrible was, that he had no time to prepare for this sad change, for it happened on a day of feasting, when his whole family had given a loose to mirth and festivity, without the least

S E R M O N III. 53

apprehensions of the destruction which so soon fell on them. Such complicated woe, we should imagine too much for man to sustain, did not this instance of Job's shew us to what height that fortitude, which is supported by a good conscience, can carry us; for though on the first shock of his calamities he bursts into some passionate exclamations; and, provoked by the cruelty of his friends, who under the pretence of comfort and advice (as is too often the case) insulted his distress, he, with some appearance of resentment, vindicates his injured reputation against

their unkind aspersions ; yet with what patient humility does he resign himself to the Almighty ; and, conscious that the righteous God, whose laws had been the constant rule of his life, would never totally abandon him, he rejoices in the certainty of meeting with that tranquility in another world which had fled from him in this : but as few, if any, among the sons of men are endowed with virtue such as Job's, which was proof against the temptations that arise from the greatest prosperity, as well as the lowest adversity, so I believe none ever met with such severe trials. Yet are there
many

S E R M O N III. 35

many, "who (as the author of my text most emphatically expresses it) die in the bitterness of their souls, and never eat with pleasure." This may be truly said of those who are always subject to some cruel bodily infirmities; whose whole life may be properly called a lingering death, till, wasted with pain they sink into the grave, and their eyes never see good.

But I will not dwell upon this melancholy representation of man, in a state of sickness, but consider him as blest with health and strength; yet among those there are many who seem

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born only to misfortune, whose waking hours are spent in labour, and slumbers broken with anxious solicitude, to obtain a scanty subsistence, with the additional mortification of seeing their hopes blasted, their schemes frustrated, and others less worthy, though more successful, preferred to those posts of honour and advantage which ought to have been the just reward of merit. Add to this, the open dangers, as well as secret snares, to which our condition in this life makes us liable. From the cruel effects of malevolence and ill-will what man is secure? and one deadly stroke from
the

S E R M O N III. 57

the hand of a powerful enemy may crush him beneath the hope of ever rising more. The unwary and unsuspecting mind is often made the dupe of the crafty and designing, who, under the disguise of friendship, a profession by which the uncorrupted heart may easily be deceived, have betrayed it to irremediable ruin.

I will only touch upon one evil more, incident to mankind; I mean the irreparable loss of friends by death: for ever to part with those who have shared with us our pleasures and our pains; to whom, as to
a second

a second self, we have confided our most secret thoughts: to recollect pleasing conversations, embittered with the sad remembrance that they can no more return: to look back on past scenes, enjoyed with those whose dearest connexions death has dissolved: to reflect, I say, on those, and with calmness, requires a fortitude that is more, or an indifference that is less, than human. Philosophy, which often serves as a pompous name under which to cover the want of feeling, may in vain pretend to support; but the man whose heart is capable of forming such tender ties, will find all the aid
of

S E R M O N III 59

of religion necessary to sustain him in these common, yet not on that account, less heavy afflictions.

Since then daily experience convinces us, that it is utterly out of our power to secure to ourselves the possession of any thing the most dear to us; "since riches make themselves wings and flee away;" since fame is a bubble which depends on the caprice of men, who are to-day loud in our praises, and loading us with honours, and to-morrow, with equal warmth, endeavouring to cover us with infamy; let us not lay any stress upon

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upon such uncertain goods. What then, will ye say, did that God, whose chief attribute is mercy, create us only to be wretched? Did he give us desires after happiness, only to laugh at our vain search for what can never be found? Are such notions suitable to the idea of a wise and good Being? No, surely; let us not for a moment entertain thoughts so unworthy of the Deity; but let us rest assured, that there will be a time when all the dispensations of Providence, which now appear so incomprehensible to our short-sighted though boasted reason, shall be fully cleared, and the goodness

S E R M O N III. 61

ness and wisdom of God be made manifest in all his works : then shall all those who, like Job, have retained their integrity under the pressure of undeserved calamities, be made companions of their Redeemer, and their God, to all eternity.

Let us then, in order to fit ourselves for such society, divest our minds of all those turbulent and unruly passions which trouble our repose in this life, and must infallibly prevent our happiness in another. He who is full of the inward horrors of envy, hatred, or revenge, can never
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be partaker of love, peace, and calm tranquility with angels, “and the spirits of just men made perfect:” nor can the voluptuous man, whose soul can rise no higher than sensual pleasures, be happy in those regions of purity. In like manner must the miser part with his love of gold, “for no one can serve God and mammon,” if he wishes to be a sharer of that incorruptable treasure, “eternal in the heavens; where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves can never break through and steal.”

May

S E R M O N III. 63

May the Almighty Disposer of all events teach us to prefer a happy eternity to this short fleeting life; "and may we pass through things temporal, so that we finally lose not the things eternal," through Jesus Christ our Lord.

THE AMERICAN DIPLOMAT OF 1919

THESE ARE THE RESULTS OF THE TESTS

THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

1911

[Faint, illegible text]

1917-18-1918-19

1890

100

This image shows a blank, aged, cream-colored page, likely an endpaper or flyleaf of a book. The paper has a slightly textured appearance with some minor discoloration and small dark spots, possibly due to age or handling. There is a faint, illegible impression of text from the reverse side of the page, which is visible through the paper. The overall tone is a light beige or off-white.

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S E R M O N IV.

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S. H. R.

S E R M O N IV.

PROV. xvii. 13.

*Even in laughter the heart is sorrowful;
and the end of that mirth is heaviness.*

IT is not to be supposed that, by these words, the preacher meant to condemn that innocent cheerfulness which is generally the companion of minds unacquainted with vice, and its attendant misfortunes. To enjoy the blessings which heaven bestows upon us, is the best way of returning gratitude to the giver; and it is

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a dishonourable notion of the Deity to suppose him best pleased with seeing his creatures covered with gloom and melancholy : less acceptable still to a pure Being must be that immoderate mirth, which shuts out every serious thought, and too often ends in riot and debauchery. The royal preacher, who had made pleasure his ultimate aim ; whose power and riches were equal to his wisdom, by which God had distinguished him above all the kings of the earth : this prince, blessed with every advantage, employed them all in a search after happiness : he gave a loose to his soul, resolved to

S E R M O N IV. 69

find out that which could yield it the most delight. After having vainly sought it among the noisy pleasures of the world, he concludes with a declaration, "that if it was any where to be found, it was in peaceful joys, and the calm felicity that arises from the consciousness of a well spent life."

In many places he exclaims against the folly of those who attempt to lose their cares in loud peals of merriment: "I said of laughter it is mad, and of mirth, what doth it?" Eccles.

ii. 2. A question which may be very well asked, since experience convinces us, that when we fly from ourselves to

such a resource, it is only parting from our anxieties for a moment, to have them returned afterwards with redoubled force. How often have we found, after an evening past in the utmost festivity, our spirits exhausted to a great degree, and even still more lowered by a recollection of the last night's mirth ! Nor will indeed always the causes of our merriment bear a retrospection. Too often the wit which circulates the loud laugh, owes its poignancy to something which must put modesty to the blush; and sometimes it shocks good-nature, by turning into ridicule the defects of a person

S E R M O N IV. 71

son who is not endowed with a capacity to return the satire. Add to this, that midnight revels generally incapacitate us for business the next day, and almost always unfit us for devotion.

But here let it not be understood that I condemn as criminal all assemblies met with a design of being merry. Recreation is not only desirable, but necessary : man is a social being, and society was not designed as a snare, but a comfort to him. A cheerful freedom of conversation softens our natures, and prevents our falling into

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mercenaries. On the other hand, if cheerfulness degenerates into licentiousness, it degrades us below humanity. There have been, perhaps, instances of men who have run into extreme riot, which their minds did not approve, merely from a fear of the imputation of ill-nature, and a want of complaisance. Good-nature, indeed, I look on as so essential, that all other virtues without it are of no value: it is the mark of an open generous soul, and finishes the character of a good man. Complaisance, which naturally springs from it, renders a man a useful member of society,

ciety, as well as an amiable companion to his friends : it sweetens conversation, and has the art of conveying instruction in so pleasing a manner, as never to offend : but there is a weakness which passes by that name, that makes people incapable of resisting importunity, however unreasonable, and by that folly they lie exposed to every temptation : not at all guided by their own reason, they are governed wholly by example, and blindly conform to the humours of others, without any settled principle of their own to rule their actions. This foolish softness of disposition is
so

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so far from deserving the name of good-nature, or complaisance, that it is owing to a base pusillanimity, which first enslaves, and, by consequence, at last renders us despicable.

Another reason which I am apt to believe is often laid hold of for running into this dangerous extreme, is the desire of acting in opposition to those gloomy mortals who look on every degree of merriment as vicious and immoral; who proudly arrogate to themselves the right of laying down rules for the world, and severely censure those who refuse to be guided

by

by them. Though these men may mean well, and deserve rather pity than anger, yet they are apt to raise indignation in minds of an opposite turn, and make them give into a blamable levity, in order to shew their detestation of the others absurdities. What imperfect creatures are we that we must thus err on one side or the other! I have, indeed, heard it alleged by some, in defence of gaiety, that when the spirits are high, the understanding appears with the greatest lustre: possibly some witticisms may at such times start forth; and often, I am afraid, in the heighth of
their

their follies they run into such ridiculous fooleries, as they blush afterwards to reflect on: but suppose I grant, which I readily can, that men of wit may shew themselves to advantage, when they give a loose to their humour; yet we must allow such humour is dangerous, as a man, elated with seeing himself admired by his company, is apt to be off his guard, and not to set proper limits to his tongue. In short, it may be said, immoderate mirth is only an artifice to avoid thinking, and is of no real advantage either to body or mind: fills men with more spirits than it leaves

leaves them able to govern; it banishes serious conversation, and leaves nothing but superficial conceits in the place, which, by insensible degrees, produce habitual vanity and impertinence, below the dignity of human nature; and when once you see a man degrade himself into a buffoon, tho' you may laugh, yet at the same time you despise him.

I would now particularly address myself to young people, who cry youth is the season for mirth, and think they find an excuse in that for every folly they are guilty of: reflection seldom
god finds

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finds a place in their breasts, and they spend the best of their days, the time when health and spirits would enable them to engage in laudable and useful pursuits, in a constant round of amusements, and a study, if it may be so stiled, how to laugh away the morning of their lives : the noon succeeds, when their more serious thoughts are taken up with the business of this life : the evening comes on, when they wonder that the hour, which once appeared at such infinite distance, is stolen so soon upon them ; but as serious thoughts will sometimes intrude, however unwelcome, let me

beg

S E R M O N IV. 79

beg my young hearers will not always drive them away by tumult and noise: a very little consideration will convince them, unless they are lost in unpardonable indiscretion, that tumultuary pleasures leave a sting behind them, and that those only can bear a future recollection which have been governed by reason and moderation.

I fear those of rank and fortune, whose example have the most influence on mankind, do, by their practice, encourage extravagancies of this sort. Bred up in idleness, their general employment is to contrive to kill
time

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time agreeably, as it is called; but surely these are very ungrateful returns to the Divine Bounty, which has so liberally provided for their happiness beyond the common lot of mortals: it is true, they have no hard labour to wear out their bodies and exhaust their minds; and certainly this ought to be looked on as a blessing. But are there not ways by which even they may employ their time in a manner useful to themselves and to others? The prudent management of a plentiful fortune requires the owner's attention, perhaps, not less than the necessary provision for
Smith daily

S E R M O N IV. 81

daily maintenance does that of the man in strait circumstances. Some time too ought to be allowed to the duties of hospitality, to entertain our friends and neighbours in a manner suited to their rank and our own; and, upon the whole, we shall find that the gentleman's time may be as fully employed as his, who labours for his living, with this difference only, that God has allotted the former the most agreeable way of spending it; and, as the bounty of heaven has exempted such men from the common cares of life, it is a duty incumbent on them to endeavour to become use-

ful members of the commonwealth, as magistrates to apportion a part of their time to the distribution of justice, for the punishment of vice, and the encouragement of virtue. By thus making themselves of consequence to human society, they may always prevent time from being burdensome to them : and suppose there should be still some leisure hours, certainly a person of liberal education can never be at a loss how to spend it, both with delight and improvement. In order to assure ourselves that we have no time to spend in riot and excess, we need only compare the period

tion of our lives with the vast variety of avocations we have to employ them in. The term we have to live may generally be called seventy years ; and though some few extend their race beyond that time, much fewer ever arrive at it. However, let us suppose that to be the stretch of man's life, yet many years must necessarily be lost in childhood ; and the infirmities of age, though not felt equally in all, will undoubtedly deprive us of some more : add to this, the necessary portion of hours allotted to the business of eating, sleeping, dressing, visiting : the management of our families and

fortunes call for their share of our attention : And is there none to be dedicated to the service of our God? Alas ! how little do the best of us consider what we owe to the Author of our being, and the Giver of every thing that can make that being desirable ! Does he not deserve from us some return of gratitude ? and is not even self-interest concerned in appropriating a few hours to the consideration of eternity ? If we cannot find time for that most necessary of all duties, we ought rather to regret our having so little, than trifle away what we have. But I make no doubt
every

S E R M O N IV. 83

every one is convinced of the truth of what I say; and a little consideration ought to be sufficient to make us not neglect this important concern.

But as it is necessary for the mind of man to be sometimes relaxed and amused, I would point out those amusements which appear to be both innocent and agreeable; among which we may reckon painting and music: painting, where people are blest with a genius, is a delightful employment; and music exalts the soul, and raises it above this world; it in-

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spires the most pleasing devotion, and anticipates the pleasures of hereafter. There are few persons of good education who have not a taste for some of the polite arts, which will ever procure a laudable and pleasing entertainment; but there are some entertainments which may be enjoyed by every one whose fortune will allow it; among which none can be more pleasing to a beneficent mind than that of relieving the pains of the distressed; to wipe away the tear of the afflicted; to ease the aching heart; to render life desirable to those to whom it has been burthenfome, are pleasures that not
only

S E R M O N IV. 87

only may be called so, at the time they are performed, but will ever afford pleasure on reflection, which noise, riot, and excess of mirth can never do.

Among other rational pleasures give me leave to mention one which I cannot look on as the least; I mean that which arises in the mind from the view of beautiful rural scenes: here we may survey the stupendous works of the great Creator, till we lose ourselves in admiration and delight. This is a pleasure which will never pall; the eye is never tired

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with gazing on the beauties of nature; still are they seen with new wonder; still beheld with fresh delight. On such occasions the soul is naturally led to adore that Being, whose wisdom and goodness are so evidently displayed before us. Happy man! who in thus contemplating the Deity can find sublime enjoyment, which the gay voluptuary can never know, and compared with which all his sensual joys are worthless.

Such amusements as these may be truly called a foretaste of heaven, and will fit us for those pure and
lasting

S E R M O N IV. 89

lasting pleasures ; which that we may
enjoy through all eternity, God of
his infinite mercy grant, through Jesus
Christ our Lord.

lasting pleasure; which that we may
enjoy through all eternity, God of
his infinite mercy grant through Jesus
Christ our Lord.

And thus we have finished the
fourth and last of the four
parts of the book of the
fourth commandment. The
first part of the book of the
fourth commandment is the
first part of the book of the
fourth commandment. The
second part of the book of the
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S E R M O N V.



S E R M O N V.

MATTH. vii. 1.

Judge not, that ye be not judged.

THESE few words carry with them a threat, which it might be imagined would be sufficient to deter any from too severely censuring the conduct of others. If we would look into our own actions, and truly examine those for which we must one day be accountable, we should find very little leisure, as well as inclination, to inspect those of other people.

If

If our disposition leads us rather to condemn than approve, we may gratify that propensity by turning our eyes inward, and not injure another by wounding his reputation. By this means we may make that beneficial to our own souls, which would otherwise prove a curse to them and to society. Our self-love will prevent our passing too severe a censure on our own faults; but those who are inclinable to censure the failings of others, will rarely err on the favourable side. When the censorious tell a story which hurts the character of any one, they either skip over or very lightly touch
on

S E R M O N V. 95

on the circumstances which might incline the hearers to judge candidly, but dwell upon, and, perhaps, too often exaggerate those which shew things in the worst light. Slanderers may be divided into two classes: the first are they whose diabolical natures lead them to invent fictions to traduce the character of any to whom they owe a grudge: the second are those who industriously spread the scandal which they have heard from others. From the first of these calumniators what innocence can secure us? What virtue can defend us from the malice of an enemy who is not restrained by the

the ties of honour, or checks of conscience? I fear such wretches are too far gone for any thing I can say to have an effect upon them; I shall only then desire those who suffer from the undeserved aspersions of the wicked, to comfort themselves with an assurance that truth will at length triumph over falsehood, and a constant perseverance in well doing, will be too hard even for malevolence itself. The second sort of slanderers which I shall mention, are they whose ears are ever open to scandal; who are greedy in hearing, and eager in spreading reports: if the things which
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such a one relates are not of some consequence, there will be no pleasure in seeming to know them; this leads him to inflame every word and circumstance; to aggravate what is blameable; to pervert what is not so; and misrepresent the most indifferent actions. I am afraid too many commit this fault, without ever reflecting that they are sinning against their neighbour in the most essential point in which they can injure him; that they are robbing him of what is much more precious than all his other possessions: yet this is really the case; and what makes the injury

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still

still more atrocious is, that it is generally more irreparable than any other. It is possible to make a man ample amends for any injustice you have been guilty of, with regard to his money or estate, by restoring four-fold; but it is not always in the power of a man who has wounded another's reputation to restore it whole as before. The evil which has been said of any one is not easily forgotten, but is often remembered to their disadvantage long after it has ceased to be talked of. It may not be an observation quite unworthy of remark, that those people are usually most severe

S E R M O N V. 99

vere upon the faults of others, who have least merit themselves to boast of; their souls not capable of rising to any emulation, find a satisfaction in levelling the rest of the world to their own pitch: But how ineffectual as well as detestable a method of covering defects is this? It is certain never to succeed: the defamer is always sure to have a number of spies on his own conduct, who will not fail to expose to public view the errors of a person who makes it his business to point out those of others. If a man would secure to himself the good-will of mankind, it must be by a quite

contrary practice ; by at least being neuter, and, if he has not good-nature enough to palliate, not maliciously aggravate faults. A good word is an easy obligation ; but not to speak ill requires only our silence, which costs us nothing, says archbishop Tillotson ; but it is a melancholy reflection to think there should be in mankind an uncharitable spirit which finds greater pleasure in detecting faults, than in commending virtues.

It is sad, but I fear too true, that none are more liable to censure than those whose great and good qualities
might

might be looked on as a certain defence against it. The evil minded and envious never fail to find a flaw in those virtues which they cannot imitate. Those who have deservedly met with applause, from the discerning and generous, have often been loaded with reproach by the rash judging and cruel. I hope I shall not be understood here as laying any discouragement in the way of those who wish to pursue the paths of virtue: for tho' a good life cannot silence calumny, it will at length disarm it, by shewing the falseness of report. The malicious slanderer may, for a time, hurt

the good name of another, by injurious scandal; but hereafter it will be found that he has done the most material injury to himself, since the severe judgment which he has passed upon others, will undoubtedly be passed upon himself by an impartial judge, "who sees not as man sees, but will reward and punish every one according to their desert." I will here mention what is seldom taken notice of, but yet is the most insidious way of ruining reputation; I mean by commendation. By bestowing lavish praises on slight virtues, the character of candour is cheaply acquired, and

and an easy belief gained, when afterwards it is made use of to the perfidious purpose of detraction in matters of real consequence. The cruelty of this practice can hardly be equalled; and, I am sorry to say it, is too successfully made use of against the most weak and defenceless part of the creation; whose characters once sullied can never be washed clean by floods of tears, or regained by the most faultless conduct: yet surely I may be pardoned when I say that, among those unhappy females, who by one false step have for ever forfeited any claim to the world's good opinion of

their past or future actions, there are some who, had they not been possessed of the most amiable qualities that can adorn the mind, would never have fallen. Tenderneſs of diſpoſition, attachment, an open unſerved confidence, an unſuſpecting innocence, have been the ſources of that fatal error, which has unfitted them for chaſte ſociety, and made them the ſcorn of thoſe who have either eſcaped through want of ſolicitation, or owed their preſervation to the frigidity of their conſtitutions, and prudent ſelfiſhneſs of their hearts. Unhappy women ! the ſame delicacy

of

of sentiment which betrayed you to your ruin, makes it insupportable to be despised “ by each affected she who tells your story, and blesses her kind stars that she is virtuous.” But how often is that inestimable jewel, a good name, lost merely thro’ suspicion? Let me then warn all those who are guilty of playing away the reputation of another, “ how they scatter firebrands and death, and say, am I not in sport?” We ought to look on every one’s character as too sacred to be traduced from suspicion only; appearances are very fallacious, and we are sometimes deceived by the strongest:

strongest : there may be many private reasons why people are not always at liberty to discover the true motives of their actions, which, if they did, might clear them from censure : there is no harm in erring on the good-natured side ; and where two constructions may be made, it is the duty of a Christian to make the most favourable one. ‘ The triumph of wit, says the Spectator, is to subdue your censure, to be quick in seeing faults, and slow in exposing them.’ Indeed it is impossible a noble mind can descend to slander even an enemy ; but it is a certain sign of a mean and abject soul

soul to delight in hearing and talking scandal. It was an excellent saying of Antoninus, the great emperor and philosopher, 'No man was ever unhappy for not prying into the actions and conditions of other men; but that man is necessarily so, who doth not observe himself, and consider his own soul.'

Undoubtedly it is our greatest interest to examine our own hearts: here, I fancy, the best of us will find so many daily offences, such a variety of passions to be kept under, such repeated failures in our duty, that to
keep

keep a proper guard upon ourselves, we shall find no leisure to be impertinently and wickedly censorious in endeavouring to publish the faults of others.

I am afraid it seldom happens that a person who is fond of tale-bearing keeps strictly to truth : the enlarging on a story, so as to excite the curiosity of your hearers, fixes their attention, and makes them listen with eagerness, which is the great point a dealer in scandal has to gain.

I must

S E R M O N V. 109

I must confess, I know no crime, except murder, that can be of such real bad consequence as what I have now been treating of; as there is no warding off a blow which is often given by an unknown hand, and may do us irreparable injury before we find out from whence it comes: nor is there any sin for which, I think, can be pleaded so little excuse: other vices have something in view, from which a self gratification may be proposed: the ambitious man may expatiate on the charms of power, the libertine on the delights of sensuality, and the miser on the enjoyment of wealth; but

but the slanderer proposes no other pleasure to himself but that of seeing others wretched: it proceeds from a corrosive self-tormenting turn of mind, incapable of being either happy itself, or suffering others to be so. There is no disposition which our Blessed Saviour expresses his disapprobation of, more than this uncharitable one: he displays his dislike of our exalting ourselves by degrading our neighbours, in that elegant parable of the Publican and Pharisee; he condemns the self-sufficiency of him who could see the smallest mote in his brother's eye, while he was unconscious

S E R M O N V. III

scious of a much greater obstruction in his own. And, finally, he assures us, that the same justice we shew in our judgment of our fellow creatures, shall we receive at the hand of our Creator. May this equitable sentence deter us from cruelly reviling each other, and teach us to live in that brotherly love and harmony which becomes the Followers of Christ Jesus.

SERMON V.

Remains of a much greater affliction
in his own mind, finally, he shows
that the same affliction is shown in
an abundance of our fellow creatures,
and we receive it at the hand of our
Creator. May this terrible sentence
draw us from cruelty towards each
other, and teach us to live in that
brotherly love and harmony which
becomes the followers of Christ Jesus.

S E R M O N V L

I



S E R M O N VI.

EXODUS XX. 12.

*Honour thy father and thy mother, that
thy days may be long in the land which
the Lord thy God giveth thee.*

THIS is a precept on which I do
not remember ever to have heard
a sermon, tho' it enjoins a duty which
I fear we have too often occasion to
be reminded of. The great law of
Nature has implanted in every human
breast a disposition to love and revere
those to whom we have been taught,

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from our earliest infancy, to look up for every comfort, conveniency, and pleasure in life; while that state of dependency remains, the impression continues in its full force, but certain it is that it gradually weakens and wears off as we become masters of ourselves, which made it indispensably necessary, lest we should degenerate into ingratitude and disobedience, that a positive command should be given; and, to render this injunction the more forcible, God has annexed to it a peculiar reward, a number of happy years to those whose filial obedience is such as is acceptable

to

S E R M O N VI. 117

to the common Father of all: and as he has been pleased to express his approbation of a steady adherence to this law, by singular marks of favour, so likewise did he punish the breach of it by exemplary displeasure; death was the only expiation of this crime.

Nor were the Jews the only nation who looked upon disobedience to parents as worthy of capital punishment.

Even at this day I have heard it confidently affirmed that, among the Chinese, should a son so far forget himself as to lift his hand in a hostile manner against his father, not only himself, but his wife and children

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would be put to death, his servants and dependents would share the same fate, the house where he lived would be razed, and the ground sown with salt, as supposing that there must be the most hopeless depravity of manners in a community to which such a monster belonged. Herodotus, in his account of the religion and customs of the Persians, tells us that they looked on parricide as an impossible thing; and that when any action happened, which appeared to be like it, the reputed son was considered as supposititious, and probably owing his birth to adultery: their notion,

S E R M O N VI. 119

tion, in this particular, sufficiently shewed in what a heinous light they regarded the sin of undutifulness in general.

I must confess, when any dispute betwixt parents and children rises high, I am inclinable to think the latter the aggressors. The anxious solicitude of parental affection, the daily fatigue which attends the nurture of helpless infancy, the unwearied application that is requisite for the formation of the minds of youth, the anxieties which the parent feels for the future welfare of his offspring, often, per-

120 S E R M O N VI.

haps, denying himself conveniences that his children may have superfluities, are obligations such as can never be acquitted; and, I own, it has often given me great pain when I have heard it remarked that love descended: surely such an observation is a reproach to human nature. Is it possible that paternal tenderness should outweigh filial gratitude? That a knowledge of long try'd friendship, experienced virtues, and the receiving benefits, which, were we to employ ourselves daily in paying, would still leave us debtors, should form weaker ties than what proceed chiefly from instinct,

instinct, and are fixed even before we can judge whether the creature on whom we lavish our fondness is worthy of it or not. Strange! that the receiving of favours should less inspire us with sentiments of love, generosity, and respect, than the conferring them! that the patron or parent should be less dear to the dependent or child, than the dependent or child to the patron or parent! Yet it is certain, that there are many more un- dutiful children than there are un- kind parents: the great wisdom of the Creator has determined there should be few of the latter, in order
to

to the preservation of mankind; but surely that there should be many of the former is a disgrace to humanity. The Almighty, our benevolent Father, has, in many places of sacred writ, denounced the heaviest curses against those who honour not their parents. On the contrary, he whose heart is endowed with filial piety, may look up to heaven with a certain assurance of having his prayers heard, his desires gratified, and of meeting with that return of duty from his children which he has shewn to his parents. But he who has filled his father's soul with bitterness, and drawn
tears

tears from his mother's eyes, may justly fear a son that will revenge their wrongs. The judgments of God can never appear more severely than by making them feel, in their own persons, the sharp pangs which are occasioned by the ingratitude of children. I believe it seldom happens but that disobedience is punished this way; for they who have been forgetful themselves of the great duty owing to those from whom they drew their birth, will rarely teach it their offspring. A love of that self which they see renewed in their children, generally makes them run into a blind fondness,

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fondness, which leaves them the dupes of their own folly ; for those, who, by their example, have learned neither love or esteem, are sure to turn that unmerited partiality to their own emolument, and despise those from whom they receive it.

In the earliest ages of the world, men were wont to look on a parent's blessing as a thing of the greatest consequence to their future happiness, and to dread his curse as an entail of misery on them and their posterity. Nor were these hopes and fears without foundation ; for we have many instances

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instances in ancient history where God seems to confirm what the father has wished to succeeding generations: and this must certainly have a good effect on the minds of children, as they would desire to avoid misery and obtain happiness. Let us not look on it as superstitious to suppose that such wishes may still carry weight with them, and that our fulfilling or neglecting our duty to parents may be rewarded or punished, even in this world. But should that not be the case, if we have any belief in religion, we may know that it will be so in another; and surely what lasts to eternity is worth

worth our care. I cannot help here remarking a species of ingratitude and folly, which is but too common: it often happens that people in a low station of life are solicitous that their children shall rise to a higher degree: to affect, which, they think, no labour too much; they deny themselves every pleasure, except what proceeds from imagination, in anticipating the figure which their young ones shall hereafter make in the world. They are indeed, for the most part, much too sanguine in their expectations; but suppose them quite answered; and that they see their children in a situa-

S E R M O N VI. 127

tion superior to their hopes, yet how often does it happen that the consequence of their being raised, instead of exciting sentiments of gratitude and respect towards those who gave up every thing to make them what they are, is, that they are ashamed of their original, and blush to acknowledge their parents and benefactors; who receive no other return for their kindness than the being shunned in public, and despised in private. In this case, the mistaken notions of the parent is no excuse for the base ingratitude of the child. But there are some who call themselves

selves dutiful, and perhaps are called
 so by the world, because they are
 never deficient in any outward marks
 of respect, which cost them nothing,
 but are very sparing in administering
 to their parents necessities. Indeed it
 is the duty of a man, if his circum-
 stances will admit of it, never to let
 a parent know what necessity is, but
 to be industrious in finding out their
 wants, without putting them to the
 humbling task of reciting them, and
 asking that as a favour which they
 have a right to demand as a debt. It
 is not giving alone, but giving with-
 out grudging, or the least seeming
 reluctance,

reluctance, that can make the gift valuable where so much is owing: not a murmur, not a complaint should be heard; but the cheerfulness of the countenance should rather express a sense of receiving than conferring an obligation. Nor is it sufficient to allow just enough to keep them above want; to allot a certain sum, and, if we find it not last to the time we expected, seem to wonder at it, as if we exacted an account where we have no right to expect any; but, on the contrary, it is our duty to take care that there shall be always something more than enough: surely there is no

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reason:

reason to fear that a parent will ever make an ill use of the generosity of his children. But, above all, there is one thing of which we ought never to be guilty; I mean the trumpeting to the world our deeds, as if we assumed to ourselves a merit in making our money subservient to a mere act of duty. If a parent has any delicacy, it will be terrible to hear from a third person, of the obligations they are under to their children; to those who owe to them not only their being, but their health, their education, their all, and without whose sustaining hand they had

now

SERMON VI. 131

now been themselves destitute of support.

I have now done with this branch of my subject, as I look upon it there would be no end answered farther; since, after all, if a man's own mind does not incline him to act liberally toward his parents, it will be hardly possible to instil it into him. But there is another error which people of perhaps real goodness of heart in other particulars, are apt to fall into; the despising the want of that genius, politeness, and address, in their parents, which themselves are

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possessed of; instead of exerting their abilities to conceal these defects from the eyes of others, they are the first to expose and ridicule them, thinking by that means to make their own excellence the more admired: but surely the display of talents, at the expence of those to whom we owe most reverence, is a vanity below our pursuit. No one can be exalted by the degradation of his parents: if we have superior qualities they will appear, and never can shine forth with greater lustre than when they are employed in showing those, from whom we derive our being, in a respectable light.

I shall

S E R M O N VI. 133

I shall conclude this discourse with an exhortation seriously to consider of the vast debt which is due to parents, of the absolute command. of God to obedience, and the many curses denounced against those who refuse to obey. And may we deserve the one, and avoid the other, thro' the merits of Christ Jesus. *Amen.*

THE R. M. O. N. 74

I shall conclude this letter with
an expression of thanks to you
for the very kind and interesting
copy of the volume forwarded me
God to the printer and the many
times directed against those who
refuse to accept of the truth we desire
the one and avoid the other, this
the matter of Christ Jesus. I have
been very much interested in the
work and in the progress of the
cause and in the efforts of the
many who are engaged in the
work of the Lord. I have been
very much interested in the
work of the Lord and in the
progress of the cause and in the
efforts of the many who are
engaged in the work of the Lord.

S E R M O N V I I



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S E R M O N VII.

PROV. xxii. 6.

Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.

HAVING already treated on the subject of the duty owing from children to parents, I proceed, in the next place, to explain what I think is the real duty from parents to children, which I look on to be little understood, notwithstanding the mistaken partiality they too often feel for them.

While

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While they think no expence too much, no pains too great to bestow, in giving them those showy accomplishments which will distinguish them in the world, they too often neglect to teach them a true knowledge of themselves, a government of their passions, and that uniform rectitude of manners, without which all superficial outward ornaments are vain and empty. Religion is the base on which all virtue is built; it ought, therefore, to be the business of the educator to instil into the minds of his pupil an early veneration for the Deity; a fear of offend-

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ing that God who is omnipresent, who is of too pure eyes to behold iniquity, and from whose blessing alone they can ever hope for happiness, either in this world or the next. This first foundation carefully laid, is seldom known not to have an influence thro' life. Such is the force of habit, that those who have had the advantage of a religious education are shocked at the first appearances of vice, and very rarely deviate far from the lessons of virtue which they have learnt in their infancy. As the chissel works the rude block into shape, so education forms the human soul, which would otherwise

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otherwise be filled with nothing more than a jumble of wild unconnected ideas, incapable of forming itself into any regular system. If we enquire into the causes why there are such numbers of people in the world who seem to have no settled principles of right or wrong, but to be swayed by interest or passion in every action of their lives, we shall find it chiefly owing to the wrong bias of their education. Parents are more solicitous that their children should shine through the brilliancy of their wit, and politeness of address, than excel in a plain unaffected goodness of heart. In fine,
they

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they wish them rather to talk eloquently than act virtuously. But, good God! of how little consequence is a flow of words, unless they convey the real dictates of a mind untainted with folly, and uncorrupted with vice.

It is much to be wished that the honest ear might never be enchanted by false reasoning, delivered in a graceful manner, and that it might never be in the power of the wicked to acquire the aid of rhetoric. To prevent which evil the seeds of religion should be first sown in the infant

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mind, the best stock on which to engraft the moral virtues, and without which foundation to inculcate lessons of morality must be vain. Every the least tendency to vice should be checked, because if thought on as of little consequence, and so overlooked or indulged, it soon grows into habit, and habitual faults are very hard to conquer. The most useful part of education is to learn and practise our duty towards God, and towards our neighbour; to be strictly and conscientiously just; and, what is still more, to be liberal without ostentation; to be possessed of that tender
feeling

S E R M O N VII. 143

feeling for others sufferings, which, in its several degrees, extends itself to every animal of creation, from our fellow-creatures to the lowest reptile, are qualities infinitely superior to what commonly embellish people of the the most refined education. In vain do we heap up riches for our children, if we take no care to inform them in what manner they should use them: instead of preserving their virtue we are laying snares for it, by providing them the means of indulging vices, which a life of labour and industry might have prevented their having leisure to think of. In the

bringing up of children parents ought not to rely entirely on their own judgments, since their partiality often prevents them from seeing, and still more often from correcting errors in their offspring, which in their future lives may be of fatal consequence.

An ancient philosopher being asked, What he thought most proper for children to learn? answered, That which they ought to do when they grow up. It is unreasonable to expect an equal improvement in all children; some minds open very slowly, and require great pains in instructing, and others are so very barren, that it

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is working against nature to teach them any thing; if these are harmless it is sufficient, and to attempt to instil a greater knowledge than to distinguish right from wrong, is only to do them hurt: but there are some who display an uncommon understanding, at an age when nothing is expected from them; the doating parent is so pleased with this early appearance of wit, and admires his child's lively parts to such a degree, as to leave him almost to his own guidance; who soon becomes sensible of his consequence, and grows negligent from a persuasion that he has already

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attained

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attained the height of improvement, by which mistake he generally appears at twenty the same that he was at ten.

It has often been a matter of dispute, whether public or private tuition is most eligible; undoubtedly, where a preceptor has only one pupil to attend, he may study his disposition in such a manner as to let nothing pass unobserved, which may be either of future advantage or detriment to him: in his frequent conversations he may convey instruction in the most pleasing manner, if he has the art of letting it fall naturally in, and losing
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the name of tutor in that of friend ; when the appearance of the tutor is too rigidly displayed, he is listened to perhaps with respect, but generally with too great a dislike for any of his precepts to make an impression on the hearer. But I think it not impossible, in a great measure, to practise this address, even where there are numbers ; and one advantage there certainly is where there is a community, that it will create an emulation, a laudable desire to excel. There are instances of children who will shed tears at being outdone : this temper,

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if kept within proper limits, and not suffered to degenerate into envy, may be a noble incitement to virtue; as that is the most promising disposition where shame is the greatest punishment that can be inflicted: to such praise will ever be the greatest reward, and will never lose its end; but will always be a means of preventing negligence, and a spur to industry in every task they undertake. There is one method of teaching of which I cannot approve; I mean severe discipline: I know no mind on which this treatment can have the de-

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fired effect; the generous and open it provokes, the gentle it terrifies, and the obdurate it hardens.

I look upon it, that there is no greater preservative against the temptations which beset youth, than the being engaged in the attaining of any useful knowledge: Idleness is the nurse of evil thoughts, and it ought to be the chief care of parents to engage the young mind in a continual pursuit of some valuable acquisition, until it has learned wisdom and philosophy sufficient to regulate its conduct. An old Greek poet

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used to say, that education was like the hand and hoe, it rooted up vice, and planted virtue. It is to be lamented, but is certainly true, that what is called the best education is, for the most part, the worst: dancing, music, and French, take up so much time, that there is little left for more useful studies: though these are accomplishments that should not be entirely slighted, yet they ought not to be thought of consequence sufficient to employ whole years in learning, which is often the case; while the greater concerns, what would qualify them for amiable members of society, make

make them worthy masters and mistresses, and valuable friends, are totally forgotten. I would not have it here understood as if I thought all the hours of childhood should be employed in grave exercises: relaxation is undoubtedly necessary both for the body and mind; to divide their time between learning and amusement, so that they may ever return to the former with pleasure and alacrity, and study may never seem irksome to them, is the great art, and what teachers should chiefly attend to. Hitherto I have spoken in general terms of both sexes, I shall now confine

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myself to the female one, whose education is of great consequence to the world, and is, I think, in general, sadly mistaken. Boarding schools are the places where they are usually bred: as I have had frequent opportunities of making observations on these seminaries of feminine learning, I must confess, I never saw any whose management I could entirely approve of. They seldom teach any thing more than external modes, and outward ceremonies; the governess's own knowledge rarely extending further: and as they are oftener people of a narrow than a liberal mind, they are generally

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generally partial to those children who have most fortune, or from whom they receive the greatest advantage. Add to this, that the chief care of them is left to teachers, who are for the most part, especially the French, extremely ignorant, and from whom they oftener learn disguise, and little low cunning, than any good qualities. They are often taught to say their prayers in a language which they don't understand; and address their God by way of getting by rote a French lesson: to be able to retain a few phrases in the same tongue, is thought of more consequence than
any

any thing else, and a conversation in their own is strictly forbidden: the breach of which command is punished as a great fault. The minds of girls are much more pliant than the minds of boys, and may, in their childhood, be moulded which way you please: how necessary then is it to give them a right turn, to instil into their tender natures every principle of virtue and goodness. Having once inspired them with that universal benevolence, which is the spirit of Christianity, politeness and complaisance will, in a great degree, be taught by it; and a few forms, which may be soon acquired,

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quired, is all that is wanting to make compleat good breeding.

I am far from thinking that women should be taught no kind of literature; or believing they will make worse mistresses of families for having more learning than their cookmaid: on the contrary, I think they are the fitter for the office, as I imagine every man of sense will wish his wife to be not merely a domestic, but a friend and companion; for which reason I would recommend such studies as tend to enlarge the understanding, improve the ideas, and entertain the
soul

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soul with the beauties of nature and virtue. Œconomy and housewifry are necessary branches of female education, and works of ingenuity and fancy may fill up the leisure hours, both innocently and agreeably: those who have a taste for music ought to be encouraged; but it is ridiculous for one who has neither voice or ear to throw away that time in forcing nature which might be spent to more useful purposes.

In fine, the great end of education is to teach us the true knowledge of the Deity, and through that knowledge

ledge

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ledge to love and adore Him; and, as much as our finite natures will let us, to imitate the bright example He has set us. Which that we may all do, God of his infinite mercy grant, through Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

T H E E N D.

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Judge to love and adore Him; and
 as much as our Father's nature will let
 us to imitate the bright example He
 has set us. Which that we may all
 do, God of his infinite mercy grant.
 Amen.

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